

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 HEW-04 AID-05 IGA-02
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 EB-08 COME-00
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /065 W
-----030382 241009Z /21

R 240820Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8456
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1208

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: UNICEF EAID SWEL LA SEDU PORG
SUBJECT: UNICEF PROGRAM IN LPDR

REF: A VIENTIANE 0781, B VIENTIANE A-21

SUMMARY: UNICEF OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT UNICEF HAD RECENTLY REORGANIZED THE PROGRAM THAT WAS DESIGNED BEFORE LAOS WAS UNITED UNDER ONE GOVERNMENT. THE NEW PROGRAM PROVIDED FOR ASSISTANCE PROJECTS BOTH IN THE "OLD AND NEW LIBERATED ZONES". OFFICIAL SAID THE CURRENT UNICEF PROGRAM SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN THE AREAS OF PUBLIC HEALTH, CHILD NUTRITION, AND EDUCATION. HE SAID SOME FUNDS ALLOCATED BEFORE 1975 FOR PROJECTS THAT ARE NO LONGER FEASIBLE OR ACCEPTABLE TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT MAY BE SHIFTED TO MEET EMERGENCY NEEDS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH. END SUMMARY.

1. UNICEF OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT HIS ORGANIZATION
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HAD RECENTLY REORGANIZED ITS PROGRAM DESIGNED IN 1974. HE SAID THAT SOME OF THE PROJECTS UNICEF SPONSORED PRIOR TO THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN 1975 WERE NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE NEW LPDR GOVERNMENT OR WERE NO LONGER FEASIBLE GIVEN THE NEW POLITICAL CONDITIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, UNICEF DROPPED A PROJECT TO CONSTRUCT A HOSPITAL AT PAKLAY IN SAYABOURY BECAUSE RESISTANCE ACTIVITY MADE

TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULT AND SECURITY PRECARIOUS. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, THE \$400,000 ALLOCATED FOR THIS PROJECT CAN NOW BE USED ON OLHER HEALTH RELATED PROJECTS. HE SAID THAT THE NEW PROGRAM IS FOCUSED ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN AT THE LOWER LEVELS OF LAO SOCIETY IN THE RURAL PROVINCES.

2. OFFICIAL SAID THAT IN 1977 UNICEF STARTED TO IMPLEMENT A PROJECT TO SUPPORT A PUBLIC HEALTH CARE STRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE LPDR (AS OUTLINED REF A). BY THE END OF 1981 UNICEF WILL HAVE PROVIDED 2,700 HEALTH KITS TO VILLAGE LEVEL SANITATION WORKERS AND EQUIPPED 400 SUBDISTRICT LEVEL DISPENSARIES AND 90 MOUNG OR DISTRICT HOWPITALS WITH INSTRUMENTS AND MEDICKINES AT A COST OF \$6 MILLION. UNICEF DECIDED NOT TO SUPPORT PROJECTS TO CONSTRUCT AND EQUIP PROVINCIAL REFERRAL HOSPITALS BUT RATHER TO CHANNEL ITS AID TO THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE LAO NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN, OUTLINED REF B.

3. IN THE HEALTH FIELD, UNICEF ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE WHO PROJECT TO TRAIN DOCTORS, NURSES AND HEALTH ASSISTANTS. IN 1977 UNICEF CONTRIBUTED \$15,000 FOR INSECTICIDE SPRAYERS TO CONTROL MALARIA BEARING MOSQUITOS. IN ADDITION UNICEF PROVIDED \$60,000 IN 1977 TO PURCHASE 500 PLASTIC LATRINES AND CEMENT MOLDS FOR WELL CONSTRUCTION TO CONTROL WATER-BORNE DISEASES. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. IN THE FIELD OF CHILD NUTRITION, OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY HAD APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE A PROJECT TO ESTABLISH A BABY FOOD FACTORY IN VIENTAKNE. THE JOINT UNICEF/WFP PROJECT WOULD PROCESS RICE, SOYA, SUGAR, VITAMINS AND MILK TO MAKE A DRY FORMULA THAT COULD BE EASILY TRANSPORTED TO ALL PARTS OF THE LPDR AND SOLD THROUGH THE STATE STORE NETWORK. UNICEF WOULD INITIALLY PROVIDE \$350,000 FOR MACHINERY, EXPERTISE AND TRAINING, AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM WOULD CONTRIBUTE FOOD NECESSARY FOR THE FIRST THREE TO FIVE YEARS OF THE FACTORY'S FUNCTIONING. THE OFFICIAL HOPES THAT AFTER THIS PERIOD THE FACTORY WOULD BE SELF-SUPPORTING. OFFICIAL SAID UNICEF CALCULATED 18,000 TONS OF BABY FOOD WOULD BE NEEDED PER YEAR TO FEED ALL THE CHILDREN UP TO FIVE YEARS OLD IN LAOS. UNICEF'S PLAN IS TO FIRST ESTABLISH ONE FACTORY IN VIENTIANE WITH THE CAPACITY TO PRODUCE 6,000 TONS A YEAR AND, IF SUCCESSFUL, TO BUILD TWO OTHER PLANTS IN OTHER LAO CITIES. UNICEF IS SPONSORING THE SAME TYPE OF PROJECT IN THE SRV ON A LARGER SCALE.

5. IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION OFFICIAL SAID UNICEF WAS SPONSORING A PROJECT TO ASSIST THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PRINT A NEW SET OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEXT BOOKS AND TEACHER TRAINING MANUALS. UNICEF BUDGETED \$1.2 MILLION IN 1976, \$1.6 MILLION IN 1977, AND \$1.8 MILLION IN 1978 TO PURCHASE PAPER, INK, CHEMICALS AND PRINTING MACHINES.

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST, 1977, UNICEF SPONSORED A JAPANESE CONSULTANT TO HELP THE LAO SET UP A NEW PRINTING SHOP. OFFICIAL SAID THE LAO INTEND TO COMPLETELY REPLACE TEXT BOOKS USED UNDER THE OLD REGIME WITH THEIR OWN TEXTS. HE ADDED THAT UNICEF FUNDS ARE SELECTIVELY EARMARKED FOR CERTAIN APOLITICAL TEXTS SUCH AS PRIMARY SCHOOL MATH BOOKS. (COMMENT: UNICEF OFFICIAL EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO APPLY CONTROLS TO ASSURE THAT UNICEF FUNDS WERE USED ONLY FOR "NON-POLITICAL" TEXTS, IF, INDEED, THERE IS SUCH A THING. END COMMENT)

6. UNICEF PROVIDED \$250,000 IN 1977 TO PURCHASE THREE MILLION EXERCISE BOOKS FOR LAO SCHOOLS. IT WILL PROVIDE ANOTHER \$.5 MILLION IN 1978 TO IMPORT PENCILS, INK, CHALK, STENCILS, AND BLANK PAPER SO THAT EXERCISE BOOKS CAN BE ASSEMBLED LOCALLY. IN ADDITION, UNICEF HAS ALLOCATED \$400,000 TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR PRODUCING

PENCILS, CHALK AND TEACHING AIDS IN LAOS.

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7. OFFICIAL SAID THAT UNICEF ALSO HAD SPENT FUNDS ALLOCATED TO EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS THAT IT DROPPED ON OTHER PROJECTS REQUESTED BY THE LAO ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS. ONE SUCH PROJECT WAS TO PROVIDE FINGERLINGS FOR A SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROJECT IN FISH PRODUCTION AT THE NATIONAL TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE.

8. COMMENT: DUE TO LPDR INDECISIVENESS UNICEF COASTED THROUGH 1976 WITH FEW PROJECTS AND NO CONCRETE AID PROGRAM. IN 1977 UNICEF HAS BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL IN DESIGNING AND GETTING APPROVAL FOR A PROGRAM WHICH SPENDS MORE MONEY PER CAPITA THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER UNICEF PROGRAM IN THE WORLD. THE UNICEF PROJECT TO EQUIP HEALTH UNITS AT THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN IS A VALUABLE BUT PERHAPS OVERLY AMBITIOUS PROGRAM. UNICEF CAN EASILY SUPPLY MEDICINES AND EQUIPMENT BUT IT CANNOT EASILY SUPERVISE END-USE OR DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS IN THE MORE INACCESSIBLE REGIONS OF LAOS. NOTING AN ESTIMATE BY MINISTRY OF HEALTH CHEF DE CABINET DR. PHOMMEK THAT 70 PERCENT OF LAO CHILDREN SUFFER FROM MALNUTRITION, A UNICEF BABY FOOD PROJECT WOULD APPEAR TIMELY AND WORTHWHILE.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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